



**Government of the Virgin Islands
of the United States
Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs
JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

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DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
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DLCA SHARES HOLIDAY SEASON TIPS FOR CONSUMERS: BLACK FRIDAY

The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs reminds businesses and urges consumer to be vigilant while making purchases this Black Friday. According to Title 12A Virgin Islands Code Section 101; no person shall engage in any deceptive or unconscionable trade practice in the sale, lease, rental or loan or in the offering for sale, lease, rental, or loan of any consumer goods or services, or in the collection of consumer debts.

False Advertising is a deceptive trade practice and it is one of the leading causes of consumer complaints. Another common example of a deceptive trade practice is called a **“bait and switch.”** First, customers are "baited" by merchants' advertising products or services at a low price, but when customers visit the store, they discover that the advertised goods either are not available or are not as good as was expected, or the customers are pressured by sales people to consider similar, but higher-priced, items ("switching"). Businesses must be sure to **clearly mark and label** original prices and then the adjusted price with the promotion added depending of the advertised sale. In addition to costly fines, DLCA can issue a cease and desist order, forcing a retailers to stop advertising, in addition to requiring the advertiser to make corrections by releasing information the public of the misrepresentations and corrections.

1. Start early. Check the stores before Friday in order to know the sales information in advance. Purchase or do potential lay-aways on items that are already on sale limited, and will not be on sale for Black Friday. Be sure to review lay away policies before completing transaction.
2. Do your homework. Follow up on recalls by visiting CPSC.gov and check out reviews that consumers submit online. Compare prices and choose the best quality product for the best price.
3. Get social. The Facebook pages and Twitter feeds of your favorite retailers are a great way to find out about deals and promotions.
6. Phone it in. Call establishments to find out information that may help you make a better decision on where to start shopping.

“Serving Businesses and Assisting, Educating, & Protecting Consumers”

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7. Create a budget—and stick to it. Black Friday sales, especially the doorbuster specials available in limited quantities, are designed to get you into the store so that retailers can sell you something else. Be aware of these tactics before completing a purchase or transaction.

8. Check all store policies in advance. It's always good to know a store's price-match and return policies before shopping. This way, individuals can ensure a remedy will be issued based on the policy outlined.

For more information email info@dlca.vi.gov or to file a report, call (340)713-3522 on St. Croix and (340)714-3522 on St. Thomas. Visit the Department of Licensing Consumer Affairs Facebook page for the latest information in consumer news and business updates, @DLCAVI.

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